Personal and Professional Development (P&PD) Branch,
Marine and Family Programs Division (MF),
Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department (M&RA), Headquarters Marine Corps

***Marine Corps C**redentialing*
O**pportunities **O**n-**L**ine **(COOL)

Credentialing Overview

Updated 1 March 2016

"Keeping Faith"

"What is Credentialing?"

- Many occupations are guided by certain professional and technical standards.
- The process of meeting these standards and earning official recognition (in the form of credentials– licenses or certificates) is called ***credentialing***.

Licensure

- *Who grants licenses?*
  Federal, state or local governmental agencies.
- *Why?*
  To set professional standards, ensure safety and quality of work, such as medical licenses for doctors. Laws and regulations define licensing standards.
- *Are they voluntary?*
  Licenses are typically mandatory (although they may be waived for certain military personnel).

Certification

- *Who grants certifications? Non-governmental agencies, associations, and companies.*
- *Why? To set professional standards for qualifications, such as a certification for a crane operator, or a Novell Network Certified Engineer. These standards are not defined by laws or regulations.*
- *Are they voluntary? Usually, although state licensure boards and employers may require certification.*
- *More than one organization can offer certifications for the same occupation.*

"What is Required?"

- Credentialing boards determine the requirements for licensure and certification. Typically they require some combination of the following:
  - Education
  - Training
  - Work or professional experience
  - Examinations
  - Other unique job-related requirements

- For some credentials, boards may have requirements related to:
  - Residency
  - How recently the training or experience took place
  - Periodic renewal, typically every one to three years
  - Continuing education requirements or reexamination requirements associated with renewal

"What This Means To You"

- As a Marine:
  - Civilian credentialing can contribute to your personal and professional career development.
  - Your initiative, professionalism and recognition of achievement in credentialing may distinguish you for retention and promotion consideration.
- Transitioning and beyond as a Marine For Life:
  - Credentials demonstrate your professional and technical attainment of skill standards to civilian employers.
  - Employers may choose to hire only employees who have certain credentials, or to pay those employees more.
  - Federal, state, or local laws may require specific credentials to legally perform some jobs.
  - Credentials may make you more competitive for employment in certain fields and may improve future promotion prospects.

Credentialing Costs

- There are two primary costs associated with credentialing:
  1. Credentialing board fees (e.g., application, exam, renewal fees)
  2. Supplemental training that may be required to qualify for the credential
- Resources to assist defraying these costs:
  - The Marine Corps Credentials Program Office has a limited amount of certification/license vouchers that may be used towards specifically-identified certification/license exams. These exams are listed by MOS on the Marine Corps COOL website (link provided below).
  - The Montgomery GI Bill will reimburse up to $2,000 per test for civilian occupational licensing and certification exams. There is no limit to the number of tests that can be reimbursed. Fees for re-testing and renewing licenses or certifications are also covered.
  - Tuition Assistance pays tuition costs up to a cap of $250 per semester hour and an annual ceiling of $4,500 for academic preparation associated with the achievement of a degree.
  - Other programs in the Departments of Navy, Defense, and Veterans Affairs can also help with supplemental training (e.g., MarineNet, DANTES, and the Montgomery GI Bill).

More Information

- Marine Corps COOL is designed expressly for your awareness, information, and knowledge of credentialing opportunities and how civilian credentials relate to your training. Visit COOL online at: https://www.cool.navy.mil/usmc/index.htm or through the Department of the Navy COOL landing page at: https://www.cool.na

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- For a more detailed explanation about credentialing, see the COOL *Credentialing Basics* section: https://www.cool.navy.mil/usmc/credentialing_basics/index.htm
- For more information on costs and resources, see the COOL *Costs and Funding section*: https://www.cool.navy.mil/usmc/costs_and_funding/index.htm
- To find certifications related to your MOS, visit the COOL *Home* page and click on the appropriate search: https://www.cool.navy.mil/usmc/index.htm

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https://www.cool.navy.mil/usmc

"Marine Corps COOL provides "how to" instructions for finding civilian credentials that relate to your training and experience as a Marine, and includes links to resources to help you prepare for credentialing exams. Your *BZO* for point of aim/point of impact – search COOL, find credentials related to your MOS, and begin the process of attaining a credential.

SET YOUR SIGHTS and ZERO-IN – on a CREDENTIAL!"

"Keeping Faith"